

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for cleaning and sterilizing the inside of a treatment chamber, comprising:

a supply of sterilizing liquid for ~~the~~this treatment chamber; and,

means for inducing, within this sterilizing liquid, variations in pressure, amplitude and frequency, and ~~in a gradient~~ slope of said variations, said means being adapted to generate cavitation within this liquid; ~~said means for inducing variations in pressure and~~ comprising a liquid column arranged between said treatment chamber and a switching member with which ~~said the treatment~~ chamber can be connected ~~effectively~~ in a cyclic way to a negative pressure, the value of the latter being in relation to said amplitude or respectively to the atmospheric pressure; wherein

a main conduit connects said switching member to said treatment chamber, two conduits connect said main conduit to the atmospheric pressure and to said negative pressure, respectively, said switching member comprising connecting passages between said conduits and said main conduit and being movable between at least two positions, one in which one of said connecting passages brings the main conduit into communication with the atmosphere, the other in which the other of said passages brings the main conduit into communication with said negative pressure, and drive means for displacing said switching member from one position to the other and vice versa.

Claim 2. (Cancelled)

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said switching member is a rotary member and is integral in kinematic terms with the output shaft of

a drive motor.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:
an endpiece intended to connect said treatment chamber on the one hand to said switching member and on the other hand to said supply of sterilizing liquid.

Claim 5. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 4, wherein a second flexible connection element connected in a leaktight and removable manner to said endpiece is arranged between said switching member and said treatment chamber.

Claim 6. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 1, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to one of Claim 1, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members,

with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 21, further comprising:
an endpiece intended to connect said treatment chamber on the one hand to said
switching member and on the other hand to said supply of sterilizing liquid.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 3, further comprising:
an endpiece intended to connect said treatment chamber on the one hand to said
switching member and on the other hand to said supply of sterilizing liquid.

Claim 11. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein a second
flexible connection element connected in a leaktight and removable manner to said endpiece is
arranged between said switching member and said treatment chamber.

Claim 12. (Previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein a
second flexible connection element connected in a leaktight and removable manner to said
endpiece is arranged between said switching member and said treatment chamber.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according Claim 21, wherein said
treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and
leaktight manner.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 3, wherein said

treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 15. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 4, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 16. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 5, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 17. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 9, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 18. (Previously presented) Apparatus according Claim 10, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~one of~~ Claim 21, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid

via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~one of~~ Claim 3, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~one of~~ Claim 4, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~one of~~ Claim [4] 5, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 23. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to ~~one of~~ Claim 10, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one

hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 24. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 19, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 25. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 20, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 26. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 21, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 22, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 28. (Currently Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein said ~~tubular~~treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.

Claim 29. (New) Apparatus for cleaning and sterilizing the inside of a treatment chamber, comprising:

a supply of sterilizing liquid for this treatment chamber;

means for inducing, within this sterilizing liquid, variations in pressure, amplitude and frequency, and slope of said variations, said means being adapted to generate cavitation within this liquid, and comprising a liquid column arranged between said treatment chamber and a switching member with which the treatment chamber can be connected in a cyclic way to a negative pressure, the value of the latter being in relation to said amplitude or respectively to the atmospheric pressure; and

an endpiece intended to connect said treatment chamber on the one hand to said switching member and on the other hand to said supply of sterilizing liquid.

Claim 30. (New) Apparatus according to Claim 29 wherein a second flexible connection element connected in a leaktight and removable manner to said endpiece is arranged between said switching member and said treatment chamber.

Claim 31. (New) Apparatus according Claim 29, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 32. (New) Apparatus according Claim 30, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of two parts which are joined to each other in a removable and leaktight manner.

Claim 33. (New) Apparatus according to Claim 29, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 34. (New) Apparatus according to Claim 30, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 35. (New) Apparatus for cleaning and sterilizing the inside of a treatment chamber, comprising:

a supply of sterilizing liquid for this treatment chamber; and,
means for inducing, within this sterilizing liquid, variations in pressure, amplitude and frequency, and slope of said variations, said means being adapted to generate cavitation within this liquid and comprising a liquid column arranged between said treatment chamber and a switching member with which the treatment chamber can be connected in a cyclic way to a

negative pressure, the value of the latter being in relation to said amplitude or respectively to the atmospheric pressure, wherein said treatment chamber is made up of a tubular element, one end of which is open to receive the working part of an endoscope, the inside of said treatment chamber being connected on the one hand to said switching member by way of a joining piece and to said supply of sterilizing liquid via the inlet channel for the biopsy forceps of said endoscope.

Claim 36 (New) Apparatus according to Claim 35, wherein said treatment chamber includes a tubular element which is open at both its ends, each of said ends being sealingly engaged in a respective annular groove in two respective closure members, with interposition of a sealing joint.